



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

July 1-July 15, 2010

### STABILIZATION

**Rehabilitating the Potable Water Supply in Paymunar Village:** In early July, USAID worked with the Afghan Government and Paymunar Village in Kabul Province to improve the village's access to fresh, clean water. In Paymunar, many families had been using unsanitary water from irrigation canals, causing a number of health issues in the community.

By supporting the Afghan Government's efforts to respond to community needs at the district and provincial level, LGCD aims to improve the relationships between vulnerable populations and their local governments in Afghanistan's most volatile provinces.



Children collect clean drinking water from a rehabilitated hand-pump well in Paymunar.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Residents approached the District Governor for assistance in rehabilitating 20 hand-pump wells, and USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project provided a grant to allow the District Governor to fulfill the request. The grant also provided short-term employment for local laborers. Soon thereafter, five repaired hand-pump wells were installed and supplied potable water to 380 families in the village. Work continues on the remaining wells.

"I am pleased that our *malik* (village elder) did a wonderful job in introducing this project to the District Governor, and that the Government approved the project and sent it to LGCD. Finally, we are pleased and thankful for LGCD's implementation of this project," said Shafiullah, a Paymunar Village resident.



Parmakan School students enjoy learning in their refurbished classroom.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

### USAID and U.S. Special Forces Repair School in Shindand:

**Shindand:** Since fighting between the Taliban and Coalition Forces damaged their school, the 600 students at Parmakan School in Hirat Province's Zirkoh Valley have been forced to sit on the floor during classes in a room riddled with bullet holes. U.S. Special Forces pledged to help the community repair the damage, and USAID's LGCD program coordinated with the U.S. Department of Education to furnish the newly refurbished school with desks and chairs for all students, teachers, and administrators.



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The handover ceremony for the refurbished school building coincided with delivery of the furniture on June 23, 2010. Village leaders, Afghan government officials, U.S. Special Forces, and USAID representatives attended the handover and were pleased that repairing the school encouraged cooperation. By working in close coordination with sub-national Afghan Government institutions and officials, the LGCD program fosters better relationships between communities and local governments to improve the delivery of public services by the Afghan Government in the most volatile provinces.



Laborers from Shah Kabul Kaln receive tools at the launch of the road project.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

**Wardak Village Gains Access to the Kabul-Kandahar Highway:** Wardak Province straddles the key highway linking Kabul to southern Afghanistan. The Governor of Wardak identified poor transportation infrastructure as a major obstacle to engaging rural communities. In response, USAID's LGCD program is working with community development councils in priority districts to identify road improvement projects that most effectively address vulnerable villages' grievances.

Through a USAID grant, Shah Kabul Kaln villagers began a cash-for-work project to gravel the 10-kilometer road linking their village to the Kabul-Kandahar Highway. The U.S. Military provided more than \$15,000 worth of gravel to the community. Improved access to the Kabul-Kandahar Highway now allows year-round access to markets, bazaars, and medical care at the District Center, and creates a closer link to government resources.

### EDUCATION

**Science Educators Learn to Use Locally Available Teaching Aids:** A lack of teaching material and classroom resources can hinder even the most experienced teacher's ability to engage students in active learning. In Afghanistan, many schools do not have textbooks or teaching aids. Additionally, most teachers in Afghanistan have not completed twelfth grade, nor attended a teacher training college.

To improve the quality of instruction in schools, the USAID-funded Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) program provides teachers with intensive twelve-day workshops to learn and



Teachers observe the use of locally available teaching materials in a chemistry experiment.

PHOTO: USAID/BESST



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practice active, hands-on teaching methods, including the use of teaching aids. The current round of training is being conducted for educators of science subjects in grades seven to 12. During the training, the teachers learn to make and use teaching aids from materials found in nature or that can be purchased inexpensively in local markets.

Recently, BESST held a workshop at Safiudin High School in Hirat Province. Sixteen teachers (nine females) practiced teaching lessons with materials they had found, made, or bought at a low price. Teachers in small groups designed science lessons on electric charges in water, contraction and expansion processes with temperature, and how lungs work. "The BESST project has played an important role in capacity building of teachers and school managers in the use of active teaching methods and other important skills for educators," commented the school's headmaster as he observed the training.

Across 11 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, an estimated 13,000 teachers will have completed the science subject training (as of June 2010).

### INFRASTRUCTURE

**Establishing a Road Authority in Afghanistan:** In mid-June, senior level officials from the Afghan Government and leaders from the private sector gathered at a USAID-sponsored conference in India to hear innovative practitioners from around the world discuss best practices in road management and finance.

The purpose of the "Conference on the Management and Financing of Roads" was to advance the Afghanistan National Development Strategy to provide sustainable financing and management of Afghanistan's newly revitalized road network. It concluded with an action plan for the creation of an independent road authority to manage the private sector delivery of both road construction and maintenance.



Senior Afghan officials consider the way forward in creating an independent private sector oriented road authority to manage and finance the nation's road assets.

PHOTO: USAID/AIRP

Through donor funding of close to \$4 billion, Afghanistan has seen its road network become one of the country's greatest national assets. However, this valuable asset will rapidly erode without continued maintenance. "Paying attention to road maintenance is one the most vital issues for Afghanistan's economic growth," said Azarakhsh Hafezi, president of the International Affairs Committee of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries.





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### ECONOMIC GROWTH

**Children in Baghlan Receive “One Laptop Per Child” Computers:** On July 11, the Ministry of Education provided specially designed laptops through the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) Afghanistan program to 279 children and teachers from grades four through six at Firdausi High School. These computers will be integrated into the school's teaching curricula, providing students with vast educational resources including access to word processing and e-mail. Equipped with internet connectivity, educational software, and a small business tutorial and market information toolkit provided in Dari and Pashto by USAID, the computers are a valuable tool for the entire family.



Children in Baghlan line up to receive their One Laptop per Child computers.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

“The integration of this technology into schools across the country is changing the face of education in Afghanistan, offering children a window to the outside world, access to educational resources, and empowering them for future growth and development,” said Earl Gast, USAID Afghanistan Mission Director. “These computers are an investment in Afghanistan’s most important resource – its people.”

The innovative OLPC Afghanistan program is a public-private partnership between USAID, the U.S.-based One Laptop per Child Foundation, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Roshan Social Programs, and the Afghan telecom company Paiwastoon Networking Services. USAID is providing financial support for the program through its Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project. Thus far, 3,500 laptops – more than half of the total committed – have been distributed in schools throughout the country. This successful venture improves Afghanistan’s educational system and rebuilds the country’s human capacity, creating opportunities for much-needed income generation.